THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The officer was transferred from MTNL to Department of Post vide order No. 7-8-2001-CWG dated 18-06-01. The officer was on medical leave from 15.06.01 *i.e.* prior to issue of his transfer order. The officer remained on medical leave upto 9.12.01 and on earned leave from 10.12.01 to 27.12.01 and joined BSNL, Delhi on 28.12.01.

(c) and (d) The officer has been paid salary at the rates applicable in MTNL in accordance with rules.

Waiting list for telephone connection in Punjab

5288. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the waiting list of telephone connections in various districts of Punjab at present, exchange-wise;

(b) since when these are pending and by when it is likely to be cleared;

(c) whether any new telephone exchanges are proposed to be opened to meet the demand of the people; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Out of total 1421 exchanges in Punjab, there are only 565 exchanges where waiting list is pending. The exchange wise details in each District, the date from which pending and the likely date of clearance is given in the Annexure [See Appendix 195, Annexure No. 48]. The clearance is subject to timely availability of material.

(c) and (d) New exchanges are being planned wherever required to clear the pending waiting list.